

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
June 10th, 2019

Minutes

In Attendance:

John Stevenson, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
Donna Pugh, DYRS/Juvenile Civil Citation
Mary Andrews, PIC
Eric McLaurin, DYRS
Keith Zirkle, DFS
Jerrica Boyer, DYRS
Pam Russac, WHCA
Nikesha Sanders, DYRS
Carrie Hyla, DYRS
Tanya Banks, DYRS
Sean Waynant, DYRS
Tricia Lyons, YOO
Jane Lyons, YOO
Matia Bryan, DCOP
Kathleen Covelli-Reyes, CSD
Raheem Perkins, DYRS

Meeting began with general opening remarks at 9:04AM.

Welcome

Director Mr. John Stevenson welcomed the group.

Juvenile Justice Bills- Director Mr. John Stevenson

Director John Stevenson discussed several Juvenile Justice Bills that may impact the Division in the future. Bill HB10 would raise the age of eligibility for a juvenile to be adjudicated from the previous age of ten to the age of twelve. The Division does not have a stance. Bill HB75 and HB76 will effect DYRS because both would eliminate YCOP. For example, a juvenile that is age sixteen and above that is tried in Superior Court for murder will no longer be housed in adult facilities. Instead they will be placed in a juvenile facility. Each state handles situations of this nature differently but must follow PREA.

The State of New Jersey has a facility for juveniles and adults. Juveniles and adults are permitted to program together, however they have separate sleeping areas. Staff are certified law enforcement and are able to employ "police arrest powers." The State of Maryland has YCOP juveniles housed in separate, stand-alone buildings run by adult corrections. The facility in Indiana, Pennsylvania is structured similar to Delaware, in that juveniles can be housed in an adult facility.

Considering the State of Delaware is small, options are limited. If the bills do pass, the state will need to explore what options are available. The question was brought up regarding mixing pre-adjudicated youth with adjudicated youth. It is important that youth who have the potential for rehabilitation are not influenced by those who are non-amenable to the rehabilitation process.

Bill SB44 and SB45 revolve around the possession of alcohol and marijuana below the age of twenty-one. The bills will work to decrease criminal charges for youth and instead propose civil citations. However, non-compliance by an individual that has received the aforementioned charges can result in further consequences.

Bill HB30 revolves around drones hovering over facilities. DYRS has requested to be included in that Bill to prevent any contraband from being dropped in and around facilities.

Community Notification Updates- Woodland Heights Civic Association

The Community Notification portion revolved around what can be done for the community to receive alerts if a resident at the Residential Cottages leaves the premises unexpectedly (meaning Walk Away Status). Alarms will ring if an incident occurs, also there will be random tests to ensure that the alarms are functioning. Currently, there is a text, phone, and email messaging notification system that community members are able to sign up with if a resident walks away from campus. The notification system alerts community members of when a resident walks away from the cottages and when he or she is returned. So far, the notification system has tested successfully twice. However, there are still some kinks in the system.

Civil Citation Presentation- Ms. Donna Pugh

The Civil Citation presentation covered the DYRS pre-arrest diversion program that offers an alternative to arrest if a juvenile falls within a category of seven low level offenses. It began in 2015, and includes all areas of juvenile justice. It enables officers to make the decision to divert a youth to another program, if appropriate, instead of arresting the youth and starting a criminal record. A statute was passed to take effect July of 2019 to expand civil citation to include all misdemeanor charges, except a select few.

There is both a 1-800 number as well as a web link provided to interested parents or guardians. Each parent or guardian is provided with a welcome packet, available in English, Haitian, Creole, or Spanish, that explains the program. The parent or guardian will have the ability to register the intended youth through either phone or computer. The average age of youth enrolled in the diversion program is fourteen and a half and ninety percent of referrals come from school resource officials. It is important to note that both youth and parent or legal guardian must agree in order to participate in the diversion program. So far, recidivism rates are very low and referrals are expected to increase.

Parent Information Center Efforts- Ms. Mary Andrews

PIC is currently developing symposiums twice a year. They aim to provide technical assistance to families with limited resources. There will be school trainings to aid both parents and

educators with the process of youth transitioning from alternative education back to regular education. Ms. Mary Andrews indicated that they are working on getting a specific contact person for each area to work on accountability. There was also some concern regarding both youth and parents or legal guardians with understanding IEPs and staff providing proper explanations.

Solicitation Efforts- Director Mr. John Stevenson

Director Mr. John Stevenson distributed a letter to all present regarding community engagement for the Community Advisory Board. All recommendations can be submitted by email to Elizabeth.Hoffman@delaware.gov

Meeting Adjourned at 10:25AM.

Next Meeting: September 9th, 2019, 9:00AM-11:00AM
1825 Faulkland Rd. Multipurpose Building #9
Wilmington, DE 19805